**Secretary to the Legislative Council:** The title of the Bill is the Cochin Municipal Act (Amendment) Bill.

**Mr. C. J. Mathew** *(Joint Secretary to Government):* I request that the President may be pleased to suspend Standing Order No. 32.

**Mr. President:** Yes. The Standing Order is suspended.

**Mr. C. J. Mathew** *(Joint Secretary to Government):* Sir, I move that the Bill be taken into consideration.

**Mr. B. V. K. Menon** *(Joint Secretary to Government):* I second it.

*Motion put and carried.*

*Clause 2 put and carried.*

*Clause 1 and Title and Preamble put and carried.*

**Mr. C. J. Mathew** *(Joint Secretary to Government):* Sir, I move that the Bill be taken up and finally passed tomorrow.

**Mr. B. V. K. Menon** *(Joint Secretary to Government):* I second it.

*Motion put and carried.*

## The Food Question in the State

**Mr. President.** Mr. Ezhuthassan.

**Mr. T. A. Ramachandra Ayyar** *(Nellayi):* Sir, I raise a point of order. There is no definite issue in this motion. Without a definite issue how can a motion be moved in this House and voted upon ?

**Mr. President:** The Hon'ble Member wrote to me saying that the food situation in the State presented several aspects which might very well be discussed in this House. I thought I was interpreting the wishes of all members of this House in affording an opportunity for the discussion of this subject which in all its aspects is, I think, of prime and urgent importance to every member of this House, I, therefore, allowed this motion to be placed on the order paper. If I interpreted the wishes of the Hon'ble Members wrongly, I can only appologise to them.

**Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan** *(Vadakkancheri):* Mr. President, I feel lucky indeed in getting an opportunity to discuss the all important question of food in this House this afternoon. The House, I am sure, will be thankful to the Hon'ble President for allowing the House an opportunity for discussing such an important question. The motion reads thus.—"This Council moves that the Food Question in the State be taken into consideration". I would respectfully inform my Hon'ble friend, the Member for Nellayi who raised the point of order that an identical motion was moved and discussed on the floor of the Imperial Legislative Council at Delhi on the 2nd and the 8th of November 1944 and the opportunity presented by it was utilised by the real representatives of the people to the benefit of their constituents. I hope such a result will follow from the discussion of the subject here. I am of a sanguine nature and I hope such results will follow here also. Now, Sir, this question as was pointed out by my friend is a most innocuous one, a most non-committal one, one on which a vote cannot be taken, and one on which a defeat to the Government cannot be administered. But then it may be asked, Sir, what is the use of tabling a motion of this kind in this House? My experience has shown that even though this is a resolution on which a vote is not possible, yet such a discussion is capable of producing results—results more favourable than the resolutions which we might pass here.

**Mr. President :** I am sorry that the Hon'ble Member is taking such a long time to get to the point of the discussion; I must remind him that his time is limited and advise him to get to the point as quickly as possible.

**Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan** *(Vadakkancheri) :* Thank you, Sir. May I know how much time can I take ?

**Mr. President :** Twenty minutes, of which 5 minutes have already gone.

**Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan** *(Vadakkancheri) :* Any inquiry was made as to what is the use of discussing a pointless motion on which no vote can be taken. Let my Hon'ble friend ask himself, Sir, what is the use of registering a favourable vote so long as the Government is not bound under the Constitution to act according to our verdict. What again do we lose I ask by discussing a non-committal resolution ? We do not lose anything is clear, except time. But time also is not lost in so doing because the Chief Executive Head of Cochin today is one who will at once react to any useful suggestion whether a vote is taken or not. I am confident, Sir, that immediate suitable action will follow our debate if we make concrete suggestions beneficial to the public at large. Let us, therefore, approach the question as optimists and not as pesimists.



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Certain quarters feel that it is an attempt on my part to praise the Government. There are yet others who think that I am out to mercilessly criticise the Government. My object, I may assure you, Sir, at the very outset is neither the one nor the other. I sought for leave for discussing the vital question of food with the sole object of pointing out to the authorities certain aspects of the administration of the Government's bold and commendable food policy, which strikes me as defective, with a view to see, that these defects are remedied to the advantage and benefit of all concerned. I trust, the Government, on hearing me and my honourable colleagues who will be participating in the debate, will react to our suggestions.

The moment the Government realised that their attempts at controlling of prices and distribution of essential commodities did not produce the desired effect, they did not hesitate, Sir, in the least, to resort to the most effective and unfailing policy of commandeering of food stuffs and the introduction of an austere system of rationing. The Government and the people can take legitimate pride in the respective parts that each played in this matter. On this part of the Government's activity I have only bogrests to offer to them.

But on another aspect of the food policy, I do not find my way to congratulate the authorities. The Grow More Food campaign initiated by the Government from almost the early days of the out break of the war, I am constrained to remark, Sir, has not been quite the success that it ought to be. Let it not be thought, Mr. President, that I am not aware of the little things—a good many in number—done by the Government to increase the production of paddy, inclusive of the major scheme of irrigation published in one of the recent issues of the Government Gazette. But the complaint, Sir, is that the Government have not done all that they could and ought to do. The Government have not yet succeeded in achieving either extensive cultivation or intensive cultivation. My first suggestion, therefore, Mr. President, is that the Government be pleased to do everything that is necessary to be done to achieve these two ends immediately.

On the administration of the food policy, Mr. President, while I readily admit that the Government have done and is doing a good deal, much more remains to be done. Let me first take, Sir, the *commandeering system* adumbrated by the Government. True, the Government has introduced a very sound, intelligent, and equitable system of commandeering. I am one who holds, Sir, the view that if, commandeering is worked to its perfection, black-markets cannot exist at all. That black-markets exist will have to be and is admitted by all. Their existance is therefore a very bad reflection upon the Government's working of their commandeering system.

Paddy is taken from the big land-holders who get large quantities of paddy as rent or michavaram or both as also from cultivators. With regard to the latter, namely the actual cultivators, they are not given sufficient inducement to part with all that they can possibly spare. The price of Re. 1—6—0 per para of paddy offered to him by the Government is uneconomically low in view of the very high cost of labour, manure, implements and cattle, not to speak of the difficulties of getting all or any of them. To meet their requirements in the matter of purchase of cloth and other essential articles, these cultivators successfully secrete, assured of getting more at the black-market, a good portion of the paddy that they would otherwise sell to the Government. The remedy is to *lavishly subsidise* the actual cultivator. There are resolutions No. 2 in my name and No. 6 tabled by my Hon'ble friend the Member for Mulakunnathukavu, on this subject. Detailed comments on subsidy I reserve for that discussion. If this namely granting of subsidy is not resorted to, Sir, the Government cannot escape the charge of indulging in the foolish policy of killing the goose that lays the golden egg.

As regards the big land lord what is had from him to the Government is what he voluntarily gives after keeping whatever he likes to keep with him for purpose of making undue profits at the black-markets. The Hoarding and Profiteering Prevention Staff as also Grain-Purchase and distribution-inspecting staff costing the Government nearly fifteen thousand rupees a year is not seen to have made their existence felt as against this clsss of paddy-owners. In fields other than food these officers are not seen to have done anything much to justify their existence. If these officers cannot, or will not, turn out the work that is expected of them the earlier the same is disbanded and punished effectively the better. Most of these paddy-owners are men highly connected wielding very great influence in all quarters and therefore capable of easily thwarting the ways even of the comparatively high paid grain-purchasing Tahsildars. These grain purchasing Tahsildars therefore look upon this class of paddy-owners as *untouchables* for fear of burning their own fingers. If they are properly and effectively dealt with quite an appreciable quantity

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of paddy can be had from them for purposes of distribution. The commendable principle of equal sacrifice by all is not seen applied in their case. The above grave defects in commandeering must be immediately remedied by appropriate acts.

That rationing on an all-Cochin basis was introduced in proper time, and that without the owners of paddy and the cultivators thereof being forced to come under this system with the result that as many as, 13,68,000 people of the State were put on ration as per the figures for 1119 and that with the quickest despatch, speaks commendably of the Government. The quantity allotted to each adult, *viz.*, one nazhi equal to nearly eight ounces, though not sufficient, unless supplemented with other foodstuffs capable of giving the remaining caloric value to keep one in a healthy condition, has, Mr. President, under the circumstances obtaining today, to be admitted as the maximum that can be allowed per head. It is surely welcome to have the ration increased to one pound per adult. Let us hope we shall be able to so raise it before long. It is gratifying to note, Sir, that the authorities though forced, through adverse circumstances over which they had no control to reduce the ration from 8 to 4 days in the week some time ago, have now succeeded in raising it to 7 out of 8 days. In these and many other things the Director of Food Supplies is unstintedly to be congratulated.

But, Sir, when we come to the quality of the supply, I wish to be not misunderstood. If I am constrained to observe that, on many an occasion, it has been and continues to be very poor, even objectionably poor at it. What is given to the rationcard-holder often happens, without any tinge of exaggeration at all, to be literally *puzhukallari* (പുഴുക്കല്ലരി) which may be effectively translated as "an amalgam of worms, pebbles and rice". I am sure, Sir, that it will never be contended by the Hon'ble Member for Food Supplies that pebbles possess any vitamin value at all, worms admittedly are not relished by many. And when it is also remembered that the poorer sections of the consumers cannot afford to pay the price fixed by he Government, *viz.*, 6 annas 4 ps. per edangali of rice sold to them, very much in excess even of the price at the black markets, the position of the Government becomes criminal to put it mildy. With a bit of greater attention on the part of the authorities more especially on the part of the watchers kept at each mill and of the Inspector of Rice Mill, in their respective duties a very enviable post not solely for its pay (Rs. 80—100) but, more for the manifold temptations that the post offers, unless the officer concerned is thoroughly straight forwad, the quality of rice offered to the ration card-holder can be made sufficiently good for the purpose for which it is intended. This defect has to be immediately and effectively remedied. Before leaving the subject of rationing, I wish also to bring before the notice of the authorities that they should not compel holders of ration cards to purchase the almost useless wheat as a condition precedent to their getting the rice portion of their ration. Again, as regards the price charged by the Government for the dry grains sold to the consumer, I am led to think, on the authority of those that are in the know of things, that the Government is profiteering largely to the detriment of the poor consumer. Have the Government of Cochin, I ask, even the questionable, though seemingly acceptable justification for their taking from the consumer the same disproportionately high price for rice, very much in excess of the Government's cost price thereof, in the matter of the objectionably high price that they charge for dry grains.

One word more, Mr. President, before I pass on to matters other than ration. It has already been acknowledged that the Government acted sensibly, equitably and quickly in the initial working of introducing rationing. But, Sir, when it comes to the question of re-issuing a lost or soiled card or the granting of a card to a new consumer, will the Hon'bl Member for Food Supplies dare to assert that there is not unpardonable delay either in his own office or in those of his subordinates? How do the activities of the Department compare, I enquire, with the personal experiences of the Hon'bl Mr. P. J. Griffiths of the Imperial Legislative Assembly, *viz.*, of his getting his ration card within but 35 minutes of his detraining himself in England which, I believe, the Hon'ble Member for Food Supplies must have read, when he was on a short visit home. Then again, Sir, with regard to the issue of permits for transporting one's own paddy to the extent of the need of his personal consumption from the Taluk of production to the Taluk of the individual's residence, the delay, in most, if not all cases, is objectionably long. My Hon'ble colleagues, who will follow me, I am sure, will be dealing in detail regarding these sorrowful state of affairs which should be remedied at once.

Another article of food, especially in the case of the poor, Sir, is tapioca. That tapioca helped the Government in tiding over a critical situation towards the close of 1118 and the early part of 1119 is frankly admitted by them. Necessary precautions in the shape of various control



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orders, for the availability of tapioca in the State, were effectively made by the Government in time. There was a time when Cochin had to import large quantities of tapioca from the neighbouring State of Travancore. But what, Sir, is the position of tapioca today in the State. It will be admitted by the Government that partly through their comparatively successful propaganda in popularising the use of wheat—though of a poor variety—and other dry grains and partly due to the existence of black-markets in plenty everywhere there is practically no demand for tapioca in the State for purposes of consumption in the State this season. This changed situation has hit very hard indeed, those who, believing the Government, took to extensive and even intensive cultivation of tapioca from the last quater of 1117 on wards. They now rule the day when they foolishly took to the cultivation of tapioca. These persons are now tremendous losers for heeding to the advice of the Government. The Government's signal failure to come to the rescue of the grower in tapioca even after repeated representations made to them has also another dangerous aspect to it. If, unfortunately, the authorities do require tapioca for their use in days to come they will most certainly have to import it from outside, for, the cultivator of tapioca has grown seemingly wiser and given up tapioca cultivation altogether. What the Government did after repeated representations in that behalf, *viz.*, permission being granted to convert tapioca into sago will have to be admitted by the Government from their own experience itself, has not met the needs of the situation. Again, in the matter of giving licenses for converting tapioca into sago the authorities are showing inordinate delay and it is deplorable that the actions of the Hon'ble Member for Food Supplies for many of whose qualities of head and heart, I have the greatest admiration smacks even of favouritism. I regret I have to make that observation. What I, therefore, suggest, Sir, is that all control even that for export outside the State, be *temporarily* removed or that, at least in the matter of granting licenses for conversion of tapioca into sago, the same be given freely to all and that quickly.

I was shocked, Sir, to hear on coming for this session that our huge stocks of food are insured only in transit (marine insurance) and not against fire. Why, I ask, this callousness. The stock ought to be insured at once even this evening for the matter is very important and extremely urgent.

To conclude, Mr. President, let me summarise:—

A. Bring all available land fit for cultivation under paddy cultivation;

B. Induce and, if necessary, compel cultivators of casual crops to change over to paddy, compensating them as regards the difference of prices obtained in the two cases;

C. Work out all possible schemes of irrigation, both minor and major, without the least loss of time;

D. Make the commandeering system perfect and thereby annihilate the black-marketeer and the profiteer and for that.—

(*a*) offer an economic return to the actual cultivator of paddy by lavishly subsidising him;

(*b*) deal drastically with the big landlord and landholder possessing very large quanities of paddy, not caring for his high connection or influence or capacity to hood-wink the authorities for he is PUBLIC ENEMY NO. I.

E. Enforce strictly and without exception the principle of equality of sacrifice in these exceptional times;

F. Improve the quality of rice offered to the consumer and make the same fit for human consumption;

G. (*a*) Bring down the price of rice within the economic reach of the poorest section of consumers by subsidising them as was recently done in Travancore;

(*b*) Don't compel the purchase of wheat in the case of those who don't want the same, as condition precedent for the issue of their quota of rice;

(*c*) Please don't make objectionably high profits in their dealing in dry grains;

H. Show reasonable despatch in the matter of re-issuing new cards in place of soiled or lost ones as also in the issue of transport permits for removing paddy from one village to another or from one Taluk to another for purposes of personal consumption.

I. (*a*) Temporarily remove all sorts of control regarding Tapioca except export outside the State,

(*b*) or at least issue permits to convert Tapiocca into Sago without any delay and to all that ask for it.

J. Preserve stock in proper and safe condition.—

(*a*) Avoid deterioration.

(*b*) Provide against Fire—Insure.

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Thank you Sir, for your induligence I have done.

**Mr. Joseph Pettah** *(Adur):* I beg to point out that in a discussion of this sort, it would be more profitable if the Hon'ble Member for Food Supplies would make his reply.

**Mr. President:** If Hon'ble Members have complaints to make, I suggest that the right order of debate is for them to voice their complaints now, so that the Food Member may meet any complaints which may be brought forward.

**Mr. Popatlal Goverdhan Lalan** *(Industries and Commerce):* The subjects of Cochin are thankful to His Highness the Maharaja for starting a good machinery as Food Supplies for His Highness' suffering subjects. His Highness' desire is well-known, that the subjects must get out of all miseries for want of food and it is for this that this machinery has been inaugurated. We know pretty well that the Head of the Department is working very hard. All the 24 hours, he is doing his duties. He is very sincere, but the result is not at all satisfactory.

**Mr. President:** I think that the Hon'ble Member would be wise not to bring His Highness' name into the discussion quite so much.

**Mr. Popatlal Goverdhan Lalan** *(Industries and Commerce):* When the Government enquiries about these things they will certainly understand how all these things have happened. I have only to make a few observations over such matters. Specially the Mover of this motion just expressed on the floor of this House that certain commodities, dry grains are sold at higher rates than the rates in the Markets. As a matter of fact I know that that statement is true. For example I shall mention here Gramdall which has been sold by Government for Rs. 38—5—2 per bag of 207 lbs. is sold in the market at about 35 to 36 rupees for the same weight. Then Toordall supplied by the Government at Rs. 49—6—10 for 200 lbs. was sold in the market at about Rs. 40. The quality was far much better than the quality which is being supplied by Government.

**Mr. President:** Can the Hon'ble Member give the dates of these transactions?

**Mr. Popatlal Goverdhan Lalan** *(Industries and Commerce):* I think that is within a period of six months. The stuff which is supplied by the Government is so much deteriorated that it is an open fact to all Cochinites that some of the commodities are not at all fit for human consumption and if the President would permit me I have got samples of those commodities which I can place on the Table of this House for perusal and as a sort of explantion. You may not be able to know what we have been expressing here. If the President would permit me .....

**Mr. President:** No.

**Mr. Popatlal Goverdhan Lalan** *(Industries and Commerce);* Then the question of jaggery. It is very sad to say here that jaggery which was imported in Cochin State under the permits of the Madras Government and to which we were fortunate enough to get a reply from the Food Department, which clearly indicates that a particular consignment was not brought under the permits issued by the Madras Government in those permits nothing was mentioned about the Cochin quota or the Cochin supply. Usually the Government of Madras issued permits and merchants brought down here. The markets of Trichur, Mattancheri and Ernakulam were flooded by this jaggery. When this jaggery came into the markets at Onam festival time according to our reading, I think the Government might have felt that due to these arrivals the market might fall down and it was the fact. Because immediately after the arrival of these consignments it was sold in the market at a very very low price. So Government might have thought that these arrivals might affect their own stock and the consumers will be able to get better quality at a very cheap price. So to kill the competition they commandeered all the arrivals. Reading the supplementary answers we were told that the invoice price and the expenses were paid to the importers thereby we have come to know that the merchants were not at all losers who imported their stuff. But there is a very funny part behind this. This stuff was purchased by Governmet at Rs. 18—4—0 for 145 lbs. and sold to licensed shop-keepers at Rs. 20—8—0 for 140 lbs. They are asked to sell at 3 as. per lb. which works out roughly to Rs. 22—8—0. The stuff which was available in the market to the consumers and the better quality was taken away or commandeered by the Government. After taking it Government has made a good profit, and not satisfied with it they have asked it to sell at a higher rate also, This will work out at a percentage of more than 20 per cent including all the expenses. Another fact that is clear is that even the price at the source was Rs. 9—9—0 and was sold at Rs. 18—1—0 per bag of 148 lbs. Comparing all these things we do not know on what principle Government are helping the subjects of Cochin. In the answer also it is stated that the notification 93 dated 2nd January 1944 was for banning. If I do not remember it is not a notification for banning jaggery. It was only a notification just to put a restriction on imports

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and on the importers. After the arrivals they have to notify the arrivals to the Government and get the sanction within seven days and then sell. By which it is clear that there was no ban for importing jaggery. It was only the failure of the Government to complete taking delivery of the quota allowed by the Madras Government. Even if there is some stuff which has been long in the Department and which are not saleable. The Department is trying to get the best for the disposal of those commodities and Government might have received some offers for all these respective goods. And they might have compared the prices that have been offered. If they take little pains to study why these commodities have been offered at so low rates, they will be able to understand that the Market has gone down very much. I challenge that even most of the dry grains are available in the market at cheaper rates than the present rates of the Government, and all fresh and new stuffs which the Government has to study well and do the needful. Yesterday at the time of Questions and Answers the Hon'ble Director expressed that the price of rice is coming down from 1119. By that answer we can clearly understand that the price of imported rice might have come down to a very low level. But the prices at which Government have been supplied have not been changed at all. It clearly indicates that Government might be making a good profit. If that is so I request the Government that the policy of profiteering must be changed. With all these few words I resume.

**Mr. H. J. Walmesly** *(Nominated)* : My excuse for occupying the time of the House is that I am responsible for the welfare of over 2,000 coolies on the Plantations. I have the following remarks to make about the quality of the rice supplied. The rice supplied for resident labourers on our estates comes from Trichur and for many months past there has been no complaint about the quality. I have made a point of personally inspecting each month's supply. As regards the bulk of the people who work on the estate, they are not resident but live in the villages which lie in Varandarappilli, Mupliyam and Mattathur. I have made constant enquiries from these people who draw their ordinary rations from the village shops and I have heard no complaints for a long time about quality. I am also a member of the Food Advisory Committee of the Mukundapuram Taluk which meets once a month and at these meetings, one of which was held only 3 weeks ago, I have enquired about quality of rice and have heard no complaints. This is my experience of the rice supplied in Trichur and Mukundapuram Taluks and I do not think there are reasonable grounds for complaint about quality. I can only say our supplies have been satisfactory and I regret to hear rice supplied in other parts is not of good quality.

The other question to which I wanted to refer is if Government are doing every thing that is possible to increase food supplies and about this I have some doubts. We have some 10,000 acres in the Hill Paddy area cleared of forest which can grow paddy. I do not propose to discuss the Hill Paddy Scheme now but I can say I remain quite unrepentant about it. I want to point out is that the land is available and is not being cultivated. This year I cultivated about 200 acres of this land. The land was of average quality and about 190 acres of it were suitable for paddy growing. I have the figures of cost kept separate and which are available for inspection by any one. The average cost of cultivating this land will work out at about Rs. 60 an acre. It is a matter of simple arithmetic to see that if you spend 60 and get Rs. 1—6—0 a para for the paddy, you must get a crop of about 50 paras an acre to cover expenses. In the cultivation of Hill Paddy on dry land it is always matter of good fortune if you can get the necessary rain at the right time. This year we had very little rain in August and practically none in September and the crop which had to amount 50 paras an acre to cover expenses fell to 32 paras. I am not complaining about my experience this year as this cultivation was undertaken not commercially but as a matter of Public Service. I think Government must realise that if they wish cultivators to take up this land and grow paddy on it, they will have to give something in the way of a subsidy with conditions as they are at present. This past season was a most unfortunate year, the previous year was also poor. Possibly next year will be a favourable season. But in the average year I doubt if you can make both ends meet if you have to spend Rs. 60 an acre. Is it fair to expect the small cultivator to take up this land without some help. I think Government should seriously consider the question of subsidising the small cultivator and encourage him to take up these lands.

One more point. Two years ago we were all talking very freely in this House and elsewhere about encouragement of hand-pounding of paddy. There was a resoultion about supply of paddy in place of rice yesterday which I was unable to support as I thought it went too far. It may be possible that there are great practical difficulties in the supply of paddy in some places, but it is quite certain it is possible to supply paddy in certain places where the people prefer it. I think it is mostly in the paddy growing areas that the people prefer paddy to rice. In these areas it will save transport not increase it, if you give paddy to the people rather than

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carry the paddy to a mill possibly 20 miles away and then carry the rice back again. There may be difficulties about storage but the Hon'ble Member for Nellayi said yesterday that there are suitable village granaries in the paddy growing areas and this is also my own experience. There was also some question about the quality of paddy and the difficulty of keeping it in good condition. If paddy is properly dried, it will keep in good condition for a year. This season I grew some 8,000 paras of paddy which was perfectly dried, but after purchase by Government it was taken away in open carts during pouring rain. In these circumstances it is obvious that the only thing to do was to take it immediately to a mill. I do honestly believe that there is no real difficulty in supplying paddy instead of rice in certain areas at least where the people prefer it and difficulties of transport and storage are not too great.

I think about 18 months ago Dr. Alagappa Chettiar gave a special donation of about Rs. 1,000 to encourage hand-pounding of paddy and this was accepted by Government, but nothing much seems to have been done and you cannot encourage hand-pounding unless you give the people paddy.

I would like to say I have great respect for the work done by the Supply Department and suggest we should all do what we can to help by making our criticism as constructive as possible.

**Mr. Joseph Pettah** *(Adur)*: I also thank the Government for having taken up this question of food control in the State and also from the way in which things have been managed so far. My purpose is only to point a few incidental difficulties and suggest remedies for the same. About the distribution of rice there has already been a sort of discussion in this Council and though the motion in that connection was technically lost till the nature of voting on the motion must have convinced the Government of what the very large majority of non-official representatives feel in that matter. I am very glad to-day that the Hon'ble Member Walmesly though he could not support the motion in the particular form, was kind enough to say that there is a very possibility of distribution of paddy as paddy at least in a few places. My motion was worded carefully. Wherever possible a proviso added to that motion; still I am very glad that there is according to me larger volume of opinion in favour of adopting that method wherever possible. I fully understand that there are difficulties in certain places especially in town where the urban section of the population have been long accustomed to the use of rice as rice and they have been mostly depending before the war upon the foreign imports of rice and their pre-occupations do not allow them to convert the smally quantity of paddy into rice. These are real difficulties. In the villages and even in town those who get weekly ration cards and to whom Government feel that rations for a month can be given, when it is ration for a month it will be sufficient quantity and it could be converted into rice, it would be worthwhile to convert the rice. As to the quality of paddy distributed the Hon'ble Member has fully satisfied from the report received from his men that it is always excellent except perhaps very few exceptions. From my experience I find that the general rule has been otherwise and is only the exception when we get good quality of rice milled. I find from Questions and Answers that a some of Rs. 6,19,000 was given for milling charges which also could be saved if paddy is distributed as paddy. In the villages the poor people who get daily wages are very insistent to get paddy. They won't accept rice. They take paddy and in a short period by night-fall that is about 8 O'clock they convert it into rice and cook and take it. They are healthy for it. Any villager will I believe be a test to that effect.

Then comes the question of wheat. It was my lot to bring this matter to the notice of the officer concerned long long ago. I happened to be a member of Food Advisory Council and I think that it would be my duty to move in the matter because there was a responsibilty or duty to the public in that respect to bring the matter to the notice of the Council from time to time. Long ago I made a proposal both to femaliarise the use of wheat among our people and also to avoid any possible danger of the wheat becoming spoiled, the price of wheat may be reduced, even if it might involve a loss to the Government. Because my argument is it would be better to save a portion rather than to lose the whole. If we do not popularise the use of wheat and reduce the price of it the whole quantity stood a serious chance of being spoiled and thereby the Government would be losing the whole money. I suggested in one of the Councils that the price may be reduced to 4 annas after a good deal of discussion on the second occassion the Council decided to reduce it to Rs. 0—4—3. What was the result? After long months the decision of the Council was a dead letter and it was not in force. What was the difficulty? The matter was represented to the Government. So the member in charge told me and there was difficulty. The Government goes rather slowly and there was difficulty in getting the resolution in force. Two long months elapsed and nothing was done. I do not blame any particular officer, may be incidental but these are exceptional cases where urgent action is necessary. Two months is a long time by which a good portion of the stock is spoiled and really it happened so in certain

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godowns. I do not know the particular case. There might have been other causes contributing to the calamity but as a matter of fact one or two tons of wheat had to be auctioned as mere fodder and not fit for human consumption. That will be the lot of whole quantity if it is not disposed of in time. In the last meeting I have again brought to notice of the Council that a further reduction in the price of wheat might be made. I even went to the length of saying that the price of wheat may be lowered to two annas so that unless a reduction in price is made people will not have sufficient incentive to consume larger quantities of wheat because they are generally accustomed to consume rice. Unless the people come to know the advantages of wheat and unless we take all possible measures to popularise the consumption the quantity would not be sold. Even if it might involve in a very serious loss such loss can be made up by the gain made in other directions especially in the matter of rice. In this connection I am in a very disadvantageous position because complete data of the Food Department is not available. I do not know wheather we could still get the figures. If you take note of the figures it seems there is a surplus profit but again my first principle stands. My suggestion is not to put the Government to any serious loss. Once again I reiterate my principle is to better to save a portion of the money incurred in this rather than to lose the whole, that is to say when the wheat is got spoiled completely it will not fetch anything. I can vouch because I am a ration card holder and I get my supplies of rice and I buy the compulsory quantity of wheat and the wheat which I get, I examined personally. It was of such inferior stock full of dust. The substance in it is gone. So rather than getting it spoiled, you sell it at a low cost. Then there will be further popularisation.

Then a word about tapioca and I am finished. In the case of this Tappioca there has been a very wide complaint that many have been ruined. I could speak from personal experience because I took the trouble of cultivating it. I have spent Rs. 400. I got only Rs. 125 by the sale of this tapioca. I give the figures as they are for the information of this House. Now I am not an exception. Very many people in very many parts of the State have suffered similar losses. Why ? Because according to the inspiration given by our Hon'ble Minister in the Food Production Drive very many people took to tapioca cultivation all over the State. Temporarily things resulted in glut. When such temporary gluts occur the proper remedy is to open the safety valve, to seal the surplus the quantity out and close the valve. I suggested the same as an illustration to the officer-in-charge. In a railway train when the steam pressure is intense the valve is opened, a good portion of it goes and then it is closed. In the same way just for three months or six months try the experiment of lifting all kinds of ban and allowing things to settle down. Watch and if necessary once again put up the old restriction. I do not believe that when once you remove the restrictions it would be hard to impose it later. The answer was not satisfactory. Very many people must have been ruined on account of this. In my readiness of safe-guard the interests of the consumers they must get the food cheap, it is true. But the producers' case must also be considered. Mr. Walmesly was pleased to say that a subsidy should be given to the cultivators. In England during the last Great War there was a Green Movement under the inspiration of very eminent figure Lloyd George. People took to the cultivation of land freely and widely all over England. When the war was over foreign supplies came in and many of the cultivators found themselves ruined on account of the very low price, so that if a similar contingency arises we have to protect the producers. Government has to give an assurance to the cultivators that the Government will come to their help and will maintain the prices at a level which would be profitable to the cultivators, especially in view of the fact that labour charges have gone very high. If prices show a tendency of going down Government should go and help the cultivators by subsidising. Trusting to the word of the Government and trusting to the inspiration given by the Government they took to the cultivation. When the prices fall down they stand to loose. The cultivators should not be made to sacrifice. Similarly in the case of tapioca a certain price was expected, and what about labour charges ? Labour charges for an acre came to Rs. 40 this year. In the last cultivation it came to Rs. 100 or even more. An ordinary cooly working in a compound can be had for only Rs. 2. Even last week I had the experience. For merely levelling the compound they demanded Rs. 2 each. Pre-war rate was 6 annas or 8 annas. Instead of 6 annas Rs. 2 and Rs. 2½ have to be paid. So the cost of cultivation has gone up so high. The price of manure has increased. The price of tapioca has gone down very low. Not to put difficulties on the consumer, Government should have gone to the help of the tapioca growers either by subsidising or by some other means. It is a clear position. If Government insist that this tapioca should not be sent outside to any market which is convenient for the producers Government should in fairness undertake to purchase the stock. Is it not a fair

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proposition ? You must find a market and you must purchase. *(Hear, hear).* You would not purchase and you would not allow people to sell. That is a most intolerable position I am afraid no fair minded Government should come to that position. We want to purchase because the things would be spoiled ; all us to seel in any market. That is the position of tapioca.

Again in that matter there was a proposal to convert it into starch. There again there was restriction. Licenses were given to a few factories or mills to convert sago. The restriction was that only a few mills could purchase tapioca for that purpose. The ordinary cultivator could not find a sale for tapioca. The mills were compelled to purchase. Of course any one can give us some figure. They were getting some Rs. 60 or Rs. 70 per ton. What about the poor cultivator? Government can sustain some loss and not the poor cultivators. My contention is that the poor cultivators also should have been given a chance of selling and tapioca should not be converted into sago. Last year it was decided that licenses would be given to very many people to convert into sago. But for this the people would get a chance of selling their tapioca supplies. Let the House remember it was 356 tons. Everybody expected the license. I suggested some people. If licenses were required, a Proclamation was necessary. Things again went rotten. For one month nothing was done. When I say nothing was done, I mean nothing operative. Correspondence might have gone. What about license ? Nothing was done. Meanwhile tapioca had to be lifted. Some people did not get even the cost of lifting of tapioca from the market. What about the expenditure they have incurred ? That might be an exaggerated case. I should say from my personal experience that it is not. What would be the condition next year ? No man would take to tapioca unless Government is prepared to give a guarantee. At least cancel the conversion of tapioca into starch. So as a last resort having failed to get any result out of my suggestions in the Council where I should have confined myself, I am compelled to bring these matters. I hope the Government will be kind enough to take proper steps and come to the help of the cultivators.

**Mr. V. K. Bhaskara Menon** *(Cranganur):* I would like to add one or two words to the fairly elaborate discussion that has already taken place. As regards the general policy of the Department in the matter of commandeering of paddy my friend Mr. Walmesly has already suggested in places where paddy can be distributed as paddy it would be a much more proper thing rather than incur the expenditure of transporting the whole thing to headquarters and then retransporting it settling all the extra charges upon the poor man who has to live on the ration card, I have got one more suggestion. In the case of commandeering of paddy what is being done is paddy is commandeered irrespective of the fact as to whether it is good paddy or bad paddy. As soon as the harvest is over the officers go there and start collecting. My suggestion is that in parties are willing to supply the department rice equivalent to the number of one to two paras of paddy the Department can save all the expenditure of bringing them giving the millowners something and at the same time the person who supplies the rice will be in a position to have all the by-products there by making it impossible to sell this article and make it possible to meet the very high cost of living that is now obtaining. At the same time if local effort is applied to convert paddy into rice he will be able to give work for the people in the neighbourhood. He will be doing public service and at the same time supplying cheap rice to the Government.

One more point which I have to stress is it is high time that price of rice is lowered. If paddy is given as paddy in those areas where paddy can easily be got people can be getting one para of rice for Rs. 3. Now they have to pay Rs. 4 and odd. There might be distinction. If paddy is given as paddy the price can very reasonably be fixed and all those people who want only paddy can get cheap rice without pauing for the difficulties of the Government in getting very costly rice from other parts of India.

Then another point which I would like to stress is this. In the matter of supply of all types of articles either it should be a case where the Government should have absolute sale monopoly of the market completely eliminating the middleman or it should be a case of Government allowing free competition to take place so that the articles of the cheapest kind would be available. What is being done? Cochin State gets a quota. It is distributed among 13 or 14. A price is fixed. Beyond that no importer can sell the article that does not solve the problem. The price of every article has gone up. It is high time that the Government begins to devise means by which the prices of these articles should be kept fairly low. As it is no attempt is being done so that along with the prohibitive price for rice and other articles a time will come when it will be practically impossible for people to live. My submission to the House is that we practically reached that limit. My submission is that as far as possible the responsibility for importing articles should be absolutely with the Government and the dtisribution alone should

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be entrusted to the various shops—Government shops and retail shops. There should not be this sort of half—hearted measure. Some sort of articles being introduced by the merchants, some introduced by quota holders. That makes it impossible for the consumer to know which is the proper price of the article which he has got to pay. With these suggestions I conclude.

**Mr. N. Govinda Pai** *(Nominated)*: I would like to add a word or two to the discussion that is going on. The first thing that I would like to place before the Government is about the way in which the food organisation is going on in the State. In our neighbouring States, that is the provinces of Madras and Travancore, it is carried on in quite a different way than in our State. In Madras the importation of products that are necessary for consumption are not at all imported by the Government as is done in the Cochin State. In the Statee of Cochin and Travancore all the imports are effceted as a monopoly by the States themselves—In the matter of distribntion again in Madras it is distributed through the old normal trade channels. In Travancore also the same thing is followed. But in our State in distribution also there is almost a monopoly I beg to submit that it would be far more advantageous for our State if the people in the vocation of trade run the trade through the normal trade channels. Two important reasons are the following. We have got in our State a great army of people who work in the Supply Department perhaps more than what we have contributed for Active Service. In the Balance Sheet or the accounts that are published the net result is shown without reckoning the cost of running that show.

**Mr. President**: I should like to remind the Hon'ble Member that the cost of the establishnment is shown underneath the statement.

**Mr. N. Govinda Pai** *(Nominated)*: I am sorry. My submission is that if these imports are done through the ordinary trade channels and if the Government would give the quotas to the wholesale importers as they do in certain few commodities even now, the whole investment would be made by the commercial people themselves. They will look to the storing and keeping things fit for consumption because they are in the line and experts in it. If the Government would only see that it is sold at the proper price then there would be much saving for the Government first as interest in their big investment and sceondly, by reducing this great army of officers they could employ part of this great staff if they choose for seeing that the prices are kept up by the merchants as fixed by the Government.

It is stated by certain members of this House and in my experience also I think it is quite correct to say, I do not know whether the Department is going to admit it; that part of the food grains are being deteriorated to a very great extent so much so that they sometimes become unfit for human consumption. The reasons for that are twofold. One is that with the knowledge that people have got in handling these things is very meagre. They do not know how to stock these goods where to stock and how long to stock. And another reason is goods are ordered for and the responsible people do not know when to order, where to order and how to order. These orders go in season and out of season and some goods are deteriorated even while they come here, although fresh qualities would be available in markets other than those from which they are got down. This makes a case for not only bringing deteriorated stuff but sometimes at great disparities in prices also. Just for example, I would quote one. Our Government are getting quotas of chillies from the Madras Presidency for the las three or four months. The price in this market is very high. At the same time chillies are available in Bengal Province: Merchants without getting any quotas and without any help from the Government are getting these chillies down from Bengal and the difference in price is so much that they are able to sell at least two annas less per pound of chilly. I do not want to blame the Government. I would request them to take proper advice. I know there is an Advisory Committee, many of our lawyer friends and many of our Hon'ble Members are on the committee. I do not say they are unfit at all. But my only suggestion is if the framing of some legislative business would be entrusted to some merchants, it would be as good as entrusting the work of import of goods to a few lawyer friends. That would be the only difference.

Another point which I would like to add is we have got recently an order that Kesari dhall should not be imported. I made enquiries at the proper source as why to this ban has imposed. I am told that there is some poisonous stuff available somewhere and so it should not be imported. Enquiries had been further made as to whether this commodity called kesaridhall is poisonous. I know it is one of the main products that are consumed locally in very great quantities. To stop the import of this stuff would not only cause great hardship to the people who have taken to it to a great extent but also would have the effect of raising the price of other grains because of its absence in the State. Whereas in Travancore there is no ban and in some districts like

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U. P. and Baroda Government are allowing free export, why do there be a general ban. My only request is to make it clear which particular quality, belonging to which particular district produces that poisonous dhall so that it can be imported from other places with safety. Now I would like to add the word about the price of paddy. Great discussions have been going on in this House to raise the price of paddy and it has been suggested by many of my Hon'ble friends that the hill paddy should be subsidised. I would ask what is the fate of the paddy in the Southern Taluk—Cochin-Kanayannur Taluk. I think I have got friends even in this House who just to see that they get good rice forn consumption, have taken plots for cultivation of paddy and they would endorse many statements that it costs them more than 3 rupees per para of paddy during this season. It would be only fair if the Government would look into this case and give subsidies to particular areas which deserve it. With these remarks I conclude.

**Mr. K. Narayana Menon** *(Mulakunnathukavu)*: Sir, I respectfully place a few points for the kind consideration of the Government in addition to what has been placed by the Hon'ble Members who preceded me. It is seen from the Balance Sheet that has been published in the Gazette of 3rd Vrischigam 1120, that the Government have been making a profit, clean profit, even after meeting most of the expenses, which very probably could have been avoided. The cost of the establishment of the Food Department as is seen notified in the Gazette absorbs something like 2,25,000 rupees. Then even deducting that, we get a balance profit of 14,697 and odd rupees. The foot note has got a further statement that unlike other ordinary merchants, the Hon'ble Government of Cochin has not made any allowance for depreciation of stock of food grains which is ordinarily done in ordinary commercial transactions. My respectful submission, Sir, is that it is poor consolation to the consumer to be told that the Government out of this profit did not make that deduction also. To my mind, the feeling of the subjects of the State is a prime concern of the Government and to my humble lights, no Government is justified to make a profit out of the transaction. On the other hand it has been the policy laid down —I do not know how far it has been practised—by many Governments that they pay subsidies on Food, so that the poor may have it at the ordinay normal prices, irrespective of the very high rise in the price-levels, so that the poor may have their daily food without much restrictions imposed upon the quantity. But in this particular case, I am inclined to think that the attitude of the Government is something which has to be corrected. As was suggested by the Hon'ble Member Mr. Govinda Pai, if only the transactions of the mercantile business were transferred with due restrictions and prompt supervision to the trading community, they might probably be able to despatch work to the better satisfaction of both the Government and the people. Not only that. The fact that we are moving in very bad times and very abnormal times is absolutely no justification for erasing the trading community out of the existence from the State. It is not possible for them all on a sudden to take to some other trade or calling and to forget all their past traditions and return to normal conditions when normal times get back. If that were accepted by the Government I am inclined to think that a large portion of this establishment charges can be saved and diverted for other more practical and useful purposes.

The next point, Sir, I would impress is the question of subsidising. I had been harping upon this question before this Council even on previous occasions. It is a well-known fact that all the necessary requirements for agriculture as cattle, the necessary manure, are all so costly, that it is impossible for an ordinary agriculturists to cultivate the property that he may have in his possession with anything like satisfaction, unless the Government comes to their help. I am told after my arrival here, and I think the Hon'ble Member for Law will bear with me when I make this statement, that he on experimenting the line of agriculture for his own purpose, found that the cost per para of paddy that he got was something over Rs. 3—6—0. If that is so, I think the Government will be perfectly satisfied that the price of Rs. 1—6—0 that is paid here as purchase price of paddy is but one half of what the poor agriculturists will have to spend. That is very poor consolation even though the Government can impose its orders and get the property out of the cultivator for the price that they offer. In that light, Sir, during the last sitting of the Taluk Committee, of which I am a humble member, we had two resolutions passed and forwarded to Government for kind consideration. One of them was the subsidisation of the agriculturist at the rate of Rs. 10 per acre of single-crop land where it is difficult to get good cultivation unless proper manure, proper plough, proper implements, etc., are available. The next is just to encourage the persons to bring out better produce and also to see that what little bit remains of the produce which he may have after satisfying the dues that he has to pay to his land-lord, namely the verumpattam cultivator, may be given a rupee more for every para of paddy that he sells to the Government

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after satisfying the dues of his land-lord. That question is the substance of Resolution No. 6 that is in the Appendix to the Agenda. My purpose in tabling that resolution, Sir, is two-fold and I take this opportunity of explaining them, so that I may not perhaps have to move it again. The point that I want to impress is that very often little or nothing remains to the verumpattamdar after satisfying the dues of his land-lord. The dues both according to the Verumpattamdars Act as well as the restrictions imposed by the Control Orders issued by the Government of Cochin, have to be paid in kind. If any tenant does not make the payment in kind to the land-lord there is an eviction suit following. So also the other clause under the Control Order enjoins that if it is not paid in kind, he has to reserve it and take orders from the Director on application. So far as the tenant is concerned, the safest thing for him is to pay the land-lord and keep whatever little he has got for his own use for sale to the Government. Then what remains? Nothing. On the other hand, if the Government will be pleased to see that over and above the ordinary price one rupee more is given to the cultivator, he will have the incentive to see that as far as possible he sells the maximum quantity to the Government, even perhaps with a little starvation for his family. Further than that, it will practically curb out black-market. Except from the producer, unless it be from the big jenmies, it is very difficult to get things for sale in the black-market. If you find that the margin between the black-market rate and the price that will be got by open daylight sale to the Government is so narrow and small, then nobody will go in for this stealing business of black-marketing. So that, my submission, Sir, is that if the Government will be kind enough to accept the resolution as it stands and the position taken upon on the rationale of the same. I submit it will be a great boon not only to the agriculturists but also to the consumer, since more and more of paddy will be available for purchase and the seller also, the poor agriculturist, will be getting something more. He really deserves this as a return for his labour.

One other point to which I would invite the attention of the Hon'ble House is to the fact about the difficulties that are entailed upon the agriculturists by the present system of paddy purchase. I do not say the system is bad. But there is something to be remedied. The Government are aware that generally the grain purchase officers go to the tenants and purchase paddy straight from them. At times, more often than not, this paddy is sold to the Government by the tenant for two ends. One is to avoid the difficulty and the trouble of taking it to the granary of his land-lord. It can be easily disposed of by simply measuring out the paddy to the purchase officers and obtaining his receipt. In so doing, he is about to face an eviction suit and the chances that he may not be able to get the property back are almost certain. To avoid that, I would submit, Sir, that the Government will be pleased to see that before they make the paddy purchase, the land-lord, whoever he may be, may be consulted and they may take orders, that any receipt passed by the Grain Purchasing Tahsildar or Grain Purchasing Officer for and on behalf of any land-lord for the paddy he has taken from the tenant will be an absolute discharge of liability so far as the tenant is concerned, so that he gains the difficulty, and the Government get the paddy and nobody is penalised. Unless that is done by the Government, I respectfully submit that the poor tenant is even today submitted to very great hardship. To my experience and knowledge, the tenants have been put to great difficulties. The Tahsildar straightaway goes to the tenant, measures out the paddy and pays the money. The jenmies would say; "we do not want your money, you should pay pattam in kind, that is the rule," and so create a crisis. The result is there is a failure of payment of pattam and a suit for eviction is filed. That is something which has happened to my experience and knowledge. Therefore, I respectfully beg to submit that the Government may be pleased to take note of it and see that the poor tenants are not put to any trouble and eviction, simply because they are obeying the orders of the Government. The fact is that the land-lords insist upon their pound of flesh and the poor tenants have but to submit. This is something which the Government can very easily remedy by taking up this matter and passing the necessary orders.

One other point which I would bring to the notice of the Government is this. No doubt, since many representations have been made on the floor of this House the quality of rice that used to be supplied has certainly improved. But even today it is certainly not what it ought to be and accepted to be so by the most reasonable quarters. I am very much delighted to hear the Hon'ble Member Mr. Walmesly that the rice that was delivered to that place has been very very satisfactory, and all honour to the persons who were doing it from Trichur and Mukundapuram, but our humble experience in the northern taluks is not exactly so satisfactory. There is yet much to be remedied and I am sure that because all possible steps were taken to remedy the defect at every step we complained, there is chance of getting much better stuffs hereafter.

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Another point is the imposition of undesired commodities upon the consumers, and that of a compulsory nature. I had occasion to bring to the notice of the Government that sometimes most deteriorated stuff placed in the retail shops and fair price shops and the purchase of the same is made so compulsory that if anybody wants to get rice, he must also purchase a fixed quantity of this stuff irrespective of its usefulness. The Government can afford to set off the cost of these articles, but let it not be imposed upon the poor consumer. Let those charges be added on to the 2½ or 3 lakhs, we don't mind. Let it not be tackeld on to the consumer and he be compelled to purchase it for no purpose known so far as consumption is concerned. These are the few points that I have to place before you and I respectfully pray that the Government may take these also into kind consideration and do the needful.

**Mr. A. V. Moothedan** *(Chalakkudi)*: Sir, I wish to say a few words on this subject. My first complaint against the policy of the Department is that the Government are not giving sufficient encouragement to the cultivators of the soil. The reason is that they are not giving adequate prices or reasonable prices for the products of their work. A resolution has been passed before in this House that the price of paddy and other agricultural products shoud be enhanced. It was not meant by that that the price to the consumers also should be enhanced. The price given to the cultivators should be enhanced and regarding stabilising the price or keeping the price to the consumer at the same level, the Government may subsidise or do some other adjustment. But what was meant was that the price given to the cultivators is not adequate. The Government were carrying on, as soon as the Japanese attacked Burma, and due to the consequent food shortage, country-wide propaganda for cultivating more and more food and people very loyally and faithfully followed that policy. Now, what is the result? Many of them are ruined. The Hon'ble Member for Adur has given clear illustrations, and I fully agree with him. There is no exaggeration If the Government can honestly say that the price given to the cultivators of paddy and other products is adequate, then I have no complaint. Can they honestly say that? If they have got any doubt let them refer to the matter the Hon'ble High Court. Similary, let them refer the matter of the price paddy for paddy and other agricultural products to the High Court to decide whether the present price is adequate. The High Court after hearing the evidence will decide impartially. They will be able to take an impartial view, because they are not consumers and they are not Member of this Council. If the High Court says the price is inadequate, then you must raise the price. If they are not prepared to do that then they must admit your position. Why do you hesitate about on such a thing? The Government are paying the High Court and the High Court decides the question. They will take evidene, let them hear the experts, the cultivators and let them come to a decision. If they say that the present price is adequate, then we won't hereafter make any complaint or criticism. I was very much delighted to hear the suggestions made by the Hon'ble Member for Europeans. He made a very bold suggestion and I am grateful to him for that statement. Subsidies to the cultivators—that is the only solution. If you enhance the price to the consumers then then the consumers will be put to a lot of difficulties. That is an unbearbale position. Therefore, the only solution of this problem is to subsidise. To subsidise the cultivators, you must fix up a scheme, say per acre of Mundakan, Viruppu, Paramba and all those things in consultation with the experts and others who have experience on the subject. Only the acutal cultivators need be helped, Those who are acutally cultivating the land should be helped according to the extent of the land they are cultivating. So that they may be compensated for the additional expenses they have to incur.

One small suggestion I want to make. There is a Leper Hospital at Adur and there are about more than 300 inmates there. Whenever the Hon'ble Member for Ernakulam and myself go there as visitors, they are complaining about the inadequate ration. The ration given to them is not sufficient for them. Of all the people in our State, I think, they are the most forlorn and unhapply people and I think some concession should be shown to these unhappy indiviuals whose life is otherwise unbearable.

**Mr. T. P. Poulose** *(Kanayannur)*: Are they getting lesser ration than others?

**Mr. A. V. Moothedan** *(Chalakkudi)*: The ration is not sufficient. They don't like to take wheat. They want to have rice only.

**Mr. T. P. Poulose** *(Kanayannur)*: Are they getting less than the ordinary citizens?

**Mr. A. V. Moothedan** *(Chalakkudi)*: They get the same ration as ordinary people. I think some concession should be made in the case of these unhappy individuals there in the matter of rations.

Regarding the high prices for consumers' goods, there are several possibilities of reducing the price. One is subsidy. The other thing is to reduce the establishment charges. The

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Hon'ble Member Mr. Govinda Pai suggested that these purchases may be made through the ordinary trade channels and I should think there is some force in that argument. What is the practice now? The Government are sending some ambassadors or some officers to purchase rice from Bombay, Karachi, Midnapore and other places and these people are mostly old Government servents, whose families are here, and they go there, remain there for some six months or so, make some purchase and then they will be in hurry to return. It will take sometime to get an understanding of things. As a result we find that the stuff is some times bad and the price is high. Therefore these merchants, who are experts in the line, will be more helpful. The Hon'ble Member for Commerce sitting here could command a good quantity of rice, if he is given a quota and he will get rice from Bomay or Karachi. The Government may watch them to see whether they are playing any fraud. They may be given an opportunity. Because of the control regulations, their work is very much reduced. So, they have leisure for philanthropic activities. That is one suggestion for reducing the establishment charges. The rice purchase from British India according to the quota is distributed between Travancore and Cochin in the ratio of 4: 1 or something like that. I don't know whethr the establishment charges are also distributed in that ratio.

**Rao Sahib M. M. Paul** *(Director of Food Supplies):* Yes.

**Mr. A. V. Moothedan** *(Chalakkudi):* In that case, I have no complaint. It ought to be done. Then about bananas. I belong to an agricultural constituency and banana is a very important product in my constituency. The bananas you get from Chalakudi are excellent. The Government have introduced control and so the people there cannot send the commodity to British India. Formerly, they were sending to British India a very good quantity and were getting good prices. Because of the control, they can't send it now. I also hear that the price is going to be controlled. I do not know if it has already been controlled. I can't keep all these notifications in my head. If there is price control regarding bananas, it is not necessary. Because to produce bananas, much hard work and expenditure are necessary. If you are going to control prices, then for the next Onam there will be no bananas. That will be the result. Already in the minds of the agriculturists, there is an inertia indifference: "What is the use of my cultivating everything. They are all controlled. I can't get proper prices and the expenses are very high". They think so. Therefore that sort of mentality should not be encouraged by the Government. If the agriculturists are not properly encouraged, the result will be the people will suffer in the long-run. When we are not producing locally what we possibly could, the Government of India will also demur. They will say, "you are not making sufficient efforts. So how can we help. So you must give sufficient encouragement to local productions and ask Government of India for their subsidy. What I submit again is the cultivators could be given sufficient encouragement.

One word about the Food Advisory Committee. The chief adviser to the Diwan in this matter is the Director of Food Supplies and the Director's advisers are the Central Food Advisory Committee. It is composed only of lawyers. My complaint is that traders are not properly represented, the cultivators are not properly represented. The Hon'ble Member for Adur along is there to represent the cultivators. Socrates has said: "Tell me who your friends are, then I will tell you who you are". Therefore, the Director of Food Supplies should choose his company well, so that there will be some cultivators also in the Advisory Council. At present there are now proper advisers, except the Hon'ble Member for Adur. I do not wish to take up any more time of the House.

മിസ്റ്റർ ബി. എം. പീറർ: മിസ്റ്റർ പ്രസിഡണ്ട്, സർ, എനിക്ക് ഈ സഭയിൽ ഒന്നരണ്ട് സംഗതികൾകൂടി പ്രസ്താവിക്കുവാനുണ്ട്. ഒന്നാമതായി സിവിൽ സപ്ലൈ ഡിപ്പാർട്ട്മെണ്ടിലെ ഫ ഫ മവ-ലെ കണക്ക് പബ്ലീഷ് ചെയ്തിരിക്കുന്നതിൽ രണ്ടുലക്ഷത്തി മുപ്പത്തൊൻപതിനായിരം ഉറുപ്പികയോളം ലാഭമുള്ളതായി കാണിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഈ സഭയിൽതന്നെ ഗവമെണ്ടു് പല പ്രാവശ്യവും പറഞ്ഞിട്ടുള്ളതു് ഈ ഡിപ്പാർട്ട്മെണ്ടിൽ എസ്റ്റാബ്ലിഷ്മെൻറ് ചാർജ്ജു കൂടാതെ കറെ നഷ്ടംതന്നെ വന്നാലും അതുംകൂടി വഹിക്കുവാൻ തയ്യാറാണു് എന്നാണു്. പക്ഷെ, ഞാൻ ചോദിക്കുന്ന പബ്ലിശ തുടങ്ങിയുള്ള ചിലവുകൾ കഴിച്ചാൽതന്നേയും രണ്ടു ലക്ഷത്തി മുപ്പത്തിയൊൻപതിനായിരം ലാഭമുള്ളതായി കാണാന്നുകൊണ്ടു് നൂറക്ക മുക്കാൽവീതമുള്ള ഒരു ലാഭം ഈ ഡിപ്പാർട്ട്മെണ്ടിനു കരസ്ഥമായിട്ടില്ലേ എന്നു്, ഇതിനുംപുറമെ ഈ ഡിപ്പാർട്ട്മെണ്ടിലെ ചിലവുകൾ ചുരുക്കേണ്ട ചില സംഗതികളെപ്പറ്റിയും ഞാൻ പ്രത്യേകം പറഞ്ഞുകൊള്ളട്ടെ.

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ഇപ്പോൾ ഉദ്ദേശം നൂറിൽ ചിലപ്പോൾ ഫെയർ പ്രൈസ് ഷാപ്പുകൾ ഉണ്ടെന്നാണ് എന്റെ അറിവ്. ഒരു ഷാപ്പിൽ ഒരു മാനേജർ, ഒരു അസിസ്റ്റണ്ട് മാനേജർ, ഒന്നോ രണ്ടോ മെഷേഴ്സ് ഇത്രയുമുണ്ടാകും. ക്രൂടാതെ വാടക സ്ഥലത്തായിരിക്കും ഷാപ്പ് നടത്തുന്നത്. പ്രധാനമായി ഫെയർ പ്രൈസ് ഷാപ്പുകളിൽ നടത്തുന്ന കച്ചവടം എന്താണെന്നു വെച്ചാൽ പഞ്ചസാര വിതരണം മാത്രമാണ്. ഈ പഞ്ചസാര വിതരണത്തിനു മാത്രമായി ഒരു ഷാപ്പിനു വേണ്ടിയുള്ള കെട്ടിടവാടകയും മൂന്നുനാലുപേർക്ക് ശമ്പളവും കൊടുത്തു ഇങ്ങിനെയൊരു എസ്റ്റാബ്ലിഷ്മെന്റ് സൂക്ഷിക്കുന്നതിന്റെ ആവശ്യമെന്താണെന്നു എനിക്ക് മനസ്സിലാകുന്നില്ല. പഞ്ചസാരയേക്കാൾ കൂടുതലാണ് അരിയുടെ വില. അതു് വിതരണംചെയ്യുവാൻ ബാക്കിയുള്ളവരെ എല്പിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. അരി വിതരണംപോലെതന്നെ പഞ്ചസാരയും വിതരണംചെയ്യുവാൻ അവരെ ഏല്പിച്ചുകൂടേ എന്നാണ് ഞാൻ ചോദിക്കുന്നതു്.

ഇതിനുംപുറമെ മിസ്റ്റർ ഗോവിന്ദപ്പൈ പ്രസ്താവിച്ച ഒരു സംഗതി പ്രധാനമായി ഈ സഭ ആലോചിക്കേണ്ടതാണ്. കച്ചവടക്കാരിൽ വളരെ പഴക്കവും പരിചയവുമുള്ളവരുടെ കയ്യിൽ ഇങ്ങിനെയുള്ള ഭാരം ഏല്പിക്കുകയും അതു് ശരിയായി നടത്തുന്നുണ്ടോ എന്നു ഗവമെണ്ടു് സൂക്ഷ്മമായി പരിശോധിക്കുകയും ചെയ്താൽ നന്നായിരിക്കും. അവർ വല്ല അക്രമങ്ങളോ അനീതികളോ പ്രവർത്തിക്കുകയാണെങ്കിൽ അതിനെ തടയുവാൻ നോക്കുകയാണുവേണ്ടതു്. അല്ലാതെ ഗവമ്മെണ്ടുതന്നെ ഇങ്ങിനെയുള്ള സകല കച്ചവടങ്ങളും കരസ്ഥമായി നടത്തുവാൻ വിചാരിച്ചതു് ശരിയായിട്ടുള്ളതാണെന്നു എനിക്ക് തോന്നുന്നില്ല. അങ്ങിനെ ചെയ്താൽ വലുതായ ഒരു ചിലവു് ഗവമ്മെണ്ടിനു കുറക്കുവാനും സാധിക്കുന്നതാണ്. ജനങ്ങൾക്ക് ശരിയായതരത്തിൽ ഭക്ഷണസാധനങ്ങൾ വിതരണം ചെയ്യുവാനും സാധിക്കുന്നതാണ്. ഭക്ഷണസാധനങ്ങളുടെ ദൃഷ്യത്തെപ്പറ്റി പല മെമ്പർമാരും ഇവിടെ പറയുകണ്ടായി. പരമാർത്ഥത്തിൽ അതെല്ലാം വാസ്തവമായിട്ടുള്ളതാണ്. ഭക്ഷണസാധനങ്ങൾ പുറംരാജ്യങ്ങളിൽനിന്നു വാങ്ങുവാൻ പോകുന്നവർ ആ വിഷയത്തിൽ നല്ല പഴക്കവും തഴക്കവും ഉള്ളവരായാൽ വളരെ നന്നായിരിക്കും. അതല്ലാതെ പെട്ടെന്നു വല്ല റവന്യൂ ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥനേയോ മറേറാ ആ ജോലിക്കയച്ചാൽ—കച്ചവടത്തിനു പറ്റിയ സാധനങ്ങൾ ഏതു് തരത്തിലുള്ളവയായിരിക്കണം; അതു് എവിടെനിന്നാണ് വാങ്ങേണ്ടതു്; വാങ്ങിയാൽ കേടുപാടുവരാതെ എങ്ങിനെയാണ് സൂക്ഷിക്കേണ്ടതു് എന്നുള്ള വിവരം യാതൊന്നുമില്ലാത്തവരെ അയച്ചാൽ വലിയ കുഴപ്പമുണ്ടു്. അതുകൊണ്ടു് ടി സംഗതിയിൽ നല്ല പരിചയമുള്ളവരെ അയക്കുന്നതായിരിക്കും ഉത്തമമെന്നാണ് എനിക്ക് പറയുവാനുള്ളതു്.

ബഹുമാനപ്പെട്ട ചാലക്കുടി മെമ്പർ അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ നാട്ടിലുള്ള ബനാനയെപ്പറ്റി പറഞ്ഞതുപോലെ എന്റെ നാട്ടിൽ പ്രധാനമായിട്ടുള്ളതു് മത്സ്യമാണ്. അതു് ഇവിടെനിന്നും പുറമെയുള്ള സ്ഥലങ്ങളിലേക്കു കൊണ്ടുപോകുവാൻ മാർഗ്ഗമില്ല. ഒരു വില്ലേജിൽനിന്നു മറെറാരു വില്ലേജിലേക്കു കൊണ്ടുപോകണമെങ്കിൽ പർമിറവു വേണം. പെർമിറ് കിട്ടിവരുമ്പോൾ സാധനം ചീഞ്ഞു മനുഷ്യർക്ക് ഉപയോഗിക്കുവാൻ കൊള്ളാത്തതരത്തിൽ ആയിത്തീരും. അതുകൂടാതെ ടോൾഗേറും കൊടുക്കണം. പോലീസ് ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെണ്ടിലേക്കും, എക്സൈസ് ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെണ്ടിലേക്കും പിന്നെ സപ്ലൈ ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെണ്ടിലേക്കുമൊക്കെ ടോൾ കൊടുക്കണം. ഇത്രയൊക്കെ കഷ്ടതകളും സഹിച്ചുവേണം ഇപ്പുണിത്തുറയിലിരിക്കുന്ന കൊച്ചി മഹാരാജാവു് തിരുമനസ്സിലെ ഒരു പ്രജക്ക് ഈ രാജ്യത്തിനുള്ളിൽ ഏതെങ്കിലും ഒരു സ്ഥലത്തേക്ക് ഈ സാധനം കൊണ്ടുപോകുവാൻ. ആകപ്പാടെ ഈ കഷ്ടപ്പാടുകളെല്ലാം കഴിച്ചുവരുമ്പോൾ സാധനം മുഴുവനും ചീഞ്ഞു ഉപയോഗശൂന്യമായി പോകുകയും ചെയ്യും. ഇവിടെനിന്നും തിരുവിതാംകൂറിലേക്കോ ബ്രിട്ടീഷിലേക്കോ കൊണ്ടുപോകുകയാണെങ്കിൽ അതിനെ തടയേണ്ടതു് ആവശ്യമാണ്. അതിനു വേണ്ടതൊക്കെ ചെയ്യേണ്ടതുമാണ്. അതുകൊണ്ടു് കൊച്ചിരാജ്യത്തുള്ള പ്രജകൾക്കെല്ലാം ഈ സാധനം സുലഭമായി കിട്ടുവാനുള്ള ഏർപ്പാടുകൾ ചെയ്താൽ കൊള്ളാമെന്നാണ് എന്റെ പ്രത്യേകമായ അപേക്ഷ.

*The House rose for the day at 5 p.m.*

N. S. RADHAKRISHNA SARMA,
*Secretary to the Caucil*

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